

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: April 10, 2008
POSITION: Oppose
SPONSOR: California Council of the Blind

BILL NUMBER: SB 1174
AUTHOR: A. Lowenthal

BILL SUMMARY: Hybrid and Electric Vehicles: Impaired Pedestrians

This bill would direct the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) to convene a Quiet Motorized Vehicle and Safe Mobility Committee to research, identify, and make recommendations to the Legislature, by January 1, 2010, on strategies to ensure that motor vehicles, regardless of engine type or configuration, emit sound sufficient to be heard and localized by pedestrians who are blind or visually impaired. The Energy Commission would be required to implement these requirements using moneys from non-General Fund revenue sources. The bill would be repealed effective January 1, 2011.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The Energy Commission estimates a range of \$400,000 to \$700,000 to convene this committee and develop a report for the Legislature. This estimate is based on historical costs for committees of similar type.

COMMENTS

Finance is opposed to this bill because it is unnecessary. Federal legislation is pending that would set the guidelines for quiet vehicles.

Current law dictates the Energy Commission to serve as the state's primary energy policy and planning agency, including policy and planning related to transportation fuels and vehicle technologies. Since 1996, the Energy Commission has administered the Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) program. The PIER program supports energy research, development and demonstration projects that will help bring environmentally safe, affordable and reliable energy services and products to the marketplace. Transportation research under the PIER program is intended to accelerate the development, availability, and use of alternative fuels, advanced vehicle technologies, and advanced transportation systems and strategies.

This bill would:

1. Make declarations of the dangers to pedestrians posed by electric and gas-electric hybrid vehicles.
2. Require the Energy Commission to convene a committee comprised of representatives of vehicle manufacturers, the blind or visually impaired pedestrian community, vehicle research entities, and law enforcement organizations.
3. Direct the committee to research, identify, and make recommendations to the Energy Commission on strategies to ensure that motor vehicles are able to be heard.
4. Require the Energy Commission to report by January 1, 2010 to the Legislature on the recommendations of the committee.
5. Direct the Energy Commission to use non-General Fund revenue sources to implement the bill
6. Sunset on January 1, 2011.

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Analyst/Principal (0621) K. DaRosa	Date	Program Budget Manager Karen Finn	Date
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Department Deputy Director	Date
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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____
			Position Disapproved _____

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